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MARSHAL OGARKOV WRITES ON VICTORY ANNIVERSARY

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[Article by Marshal of the Soviet Union N. Ogarkov under the rubric: ^{for} "on the 40th Anniversary of the Great Victory": "Unfading Glory of Soviet Arms"]

[Text] The Soviet people, our foreign friends, and the entire progressive world public are preparing to celebrate widely and triumphantly the 40th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. The victory was a graphic and convincing demonstration of socialism's strength and indestructibility and of the triumph of the cause of the Great October.

Objectively considering, from present-day positions, the importance of the victory over fascist Germany, people of goodwill throughout the world are realizing more and more distinctly and clearly that it was a truly historic frontier in the face of mankind and had the most profound influence on the entire course of world development. Here they express feelings of gratitude and thanks primarily to the heroic Soviet people who, under the leadership of their Communist Party, in a struggle of unprecedented scale and ferocity against imperialism's shock force -- Hitler's fascism -- not only upheld their motherland's honor and independence but also saved the world from the brown plague and defended the future of world civilization against this plague.

The path of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces toward victory in the Great Patriotic War was long and hard. It lasted nearly 4 years and passed through fierce, bloody fighting and battles, through the gravest ordeals. In 1941, exploiting temporary advantages, the enemy succeeded in invading deep into our country. But despite this, Soviet people were not demoralized and did not lose the will for victory over the invaders.

In the extraordinarily complex situation, the Communist Party very rapidly mobilized to the sacred war the powerful forces of Soviet society with which Great October had provided it and turned the country into a monolithic fighting camp. In this hard period, in bloody fighting, our Army, wearing down the enemy's crack divisions, destroyed his manpower and equipment, staunchly defended itself, and delivered counterstrikes.

Especially hard fighting, which had determining influence on the further course of the war, developed in the fall of 1941 near Moscow. At that time the peoples of all countries of the world held their breath as they watched with alarm the historic battle that developed on the fields near Moscow. A grouping of nearly 2 million crack fascist troops descended on our motherland's capital.

In the hard defensive fighting from 30 September through 4 December, Soviet troops, wearing down and draining the enemy units and formations, obliged the enemy to shift to the offensive. Then the troops of the Western front and the Kalinin, and right flanks of the southwestern fronts, virtually without an operational pause, moved to a resolute counteroffensive on 5-6 December and by 8 January 1942 had driven the enemy 100-250 km back from the walls of Moscow, destroying 11 armored divisions, 4 motorized divisions, and 23 infantry divisions. At the concluding stage of the Moscow battle, during the subsequent general offensive, Soviet troops, in January through April 1942 defeated a further 16 enemy divisions and in the 4 months of the offensive drove the enemy back a total of 150-400 km. Only the urgent dispatch from West Europe of over 12 new divisions saved the fascist group of "center" armies from total defeat.

For fascist Germany, the Wehrmacht's unprecedented defeat was not simply a military setback, as the bourgeois falsifiers of history try to depict it, but a real shock to its entire military system.

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The Soviet Armed Forces had forced Hitler's "invincible" army into a strategic defense all along the Soviet-German front and had confronted it with the prospect of waging a protracted war. The "Blitzkrieg" plan had failed. The main idea of fascist Germany's military doctrine was defeated.

The Soviet troops' victory near Moscow was an enormous inspiring incentive for the entire Soviet people in the further struggle against the aggressor, raised the USSR's international prestige still higher, eliminated the threat of a German invasion of Britain, strengthened the foundations of the anti-Hitler coalition, and helped to boost considerably the liberation movement of the peoples of occupied countries. It was here that the dawn of our great victory broke. After the Moscow battle, fascist Germany still, of course, possessed considerable economic and military potential. Nonetheless, after the losses it had incurred it was no longer able, as in 1941, to conduct offensive operations all along the Soviet-German front. And although in the summer of 1942, exploiting the absence of a second front in Europe, fascist Germany, transferring additional forces from the West, again launched a major offensive, it was no longer able to do this all along the Soviet-German front, but only on its southern flank.

In July 1942 the battle of Stalingrad -- the biggest battle of World War II -- began. The fascists were storming Stalingrad ferociously, increasing their troops from 38 divisions in mid-July to 69 in late August and over 80 divisions by late September, but, having lost about 700,000 of their soldiers and officers killed and wounded, they were still unable to break the resistance of the city's defenders. The heroic defense of Stalingrad proved invincible.

Moving to a swift counteroffensive in November 1942, the Soviet troops inflicted on Hitler's army here an even more crushing defeat than in the Moscow fighting. In just 6 and 1/2 months of constant fighting and hostilities during the battle of Stalingrad, the enemy lost up to half a million men -- about one-fourth of his forces operating on the Soviet-German front at that time. Of his divisions, 32 were totally destroyed or taken prisoner and 16 were gravely defeated.

The defeat of the German fascist troops at the walls of the fortress on the Volga largely helped the success of the allies in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Pacific and at the same time sharply aggravated the crisis in the fascist camp and undermined the confidence of the European satellites of Hitler's Germany in its ability to withstand the strikes of the Soviet Armed Forces. Militarist Japan and Turkey definitively renounced entering the war against the USSR.

The Soviet Armed Forces' victory on the Volga made a decisive contribution to the achievement of a fundamental breakthrough, not only in the Great Patriotic War, but also in the entire world war. It convincingly showed the whole world the Soviet Union's invincibility and its ability to defeat fascism by its own efforts. The battle of Stalingrad laid the foundation to the mass expulsion of the Nazi invaders from Soviet soil. After the battle of Stalingrad, Hitler's army could only prepare, 6 months later, a major new offensive on one narrow sector of the front -- the Kursk Bulge. However, even that plan was not destined to be realized.

In July 1943 the renowned Kursk battle began. In a desperate attempt to seize the strategic initiative and come what may to change the course of the war in its favor, the German fascist command, with a view to carrying out operation "Citadel" to destroy the grouping of Soviet troops at the Kursk Bulge, concentrated 50 divisions, including 15 armored and motorized divisions, in the regions of Orel and Belgorod.

In the gigantic battle at the Kursk Bulge, which became one of the most important stages on the path to our great victory, the Soviet Armed Forces definitively broke the back of Hitler's war machine.

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In less than 2 months our troops defeated 30 enemy divisions here. The fascist army lost about 500,000 soldiers and officers, 1,500 tanks, 3,000 guns and mortars, and over 3,700 aircraft. Developing the offensive and delivering crushing strikes, the Soviet troops cleared the Donbass and the left-bank Ukraine of the enemy and reached the Dnepr. Hitler's Germany could no longer recover from this defeat before the end of the war. If the battle of Moscow dispelled the myth of the fascist army's invincibility, if the battle of Stalingrad heralded the Wehrmacht's decline, then the fighting at Kursk and then on the Dnepr faced Hitler's Germany with a catastrophe and marked the conclusion of a fundamental breakthrough in the Soviet Union's war against Hitler's Germany and in World War II as a whole.

A correct understanding of the gist of the great battles of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk won by the Soviet Armed Forces and an objective assessment of them are of not only historical but also sociopolitical importance. The development of a unified understanding of this question is important for scientific research and for a study of the history of World War II. The role played by the correct assessment of the battles waged is also important in the present keen ideological struggle against the bourgeois falsifiers.

The achievements of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces in 1943, at the front and behind the lines, created favorable conditions for the complete expulsion of the German fascist invaders from our country. This was done in 1944, which has gone down in history as a year of decisive victories.

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The Supreme High Command Headquarters and the General Staff embarked on the drafting of a plan for military operations for 1944 during the fighting and hostilities in the fall of 1943. On the basis of a profound, comprehensive analysis of the world military-political situation and the position and correlation of forces of the warring sides, it was concluded that there was a real possibility of the Soviet Armed Forces' conducting a number of large-scale offensive operations in 1944 and not on one or two strategic salients, as had been the case in previous years of the war, but all along the Soviet-German front, from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, with a view to defeating the main forces of fascist Germany and its allies, totally liberating the USSR's territory, and moving hostilities beyond the USSR.

Continuing combat operations in secondary theaters (Africa, Italy, and the Atlantic), the United States and Britain at that time adopted a temporizing stance and delayed opening a second front in Europe.

Hitler's command, assessing the prevailing situation on the Eastern front, sought to use strategic defense to exhaust the strength of the Soviet Army and deprive it of its offensive potential. But these enemy plans were thwarted.

The Soviet Armed Forces' military operations during the year of decisive battles were unleashed a week before the start of 1944 in the Right-bank Ukraine with an offensive by the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Ukrainian fronts under the command of Generals N.F. Vatutin, I.S. Konev, R. Ya. Malinovskiy, and F.I. Tolbukhin. Despite the complex conditions of the unsettled winter weather and the bad roads in the spring, the Soviet troops, delivering consistent and one-time strikes, broke the enemy defense within a sector of 1,400 km from Pripyat to the lower reaches of the Dnepr and defeated about 100 enemy divisions. By the summer of 1944 they had completed liberated the Right-bank Ukraine, the Crimea, and a substantial part of Moldavia and had reached the border with Romania and move hostilities to its territory. As a result of Soviet troops' successful operations on the southwestern salient, an advantageous situation was created for launching strategic offensive operations on other salients of the Soviet-German front.

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As early as mid-January 1944, when the Hitlerite command's entire attention was focused on the Right-bank Ukraine, the offensive of the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts began under the command of Generals L.A. Govorov and K.A. Meretskov in conjunction with the troops of the 2d Baltic front under the command of General M.M. Popov. Delivering powerful strikes against the enemy, Soviet troops defeated the deeply echeloned defense of the armies of the "North" group and by late February had reached the Narva-Godv-Pskov line. Advancing 220-280 km, they defeated 26 enemy divisions, liberated Leningrad from the blockade, purged almost all of Leningrad Oblast and part of Kalinin Oblast, and created favorable preconditions for offensive operations on the Karelian Isthmus and the Baltic.

Simultaneously with the operations in the Right-bank Ukraine and near Leningrad, the Soviet Army launched offensive operations on the central sector of the Soviet-German front. The troops of the 1st Baltic, Western, and Belorussian (as of 17 February 1944 the 1st Belorussian) fronts under the command of Generals I.K. Bagramyan, V.D. Sokolovskiy, and K.K. Rokossovskiy used their combat active operations to reliably tie down the group of "Center" armies and prevented its forces and weapons from maneuvering to the Right-bank Ukraine and Leningrad, where the troops of Hitler's reich were suffering a grave defeat. Here our troops liberated part of Belorussia and improved their operational position, capturing in depth the flanks of the group of "Center" armies and creating favorable conditions for its defeat.

The June 1944 summer offensive was opened initially by the troops of the Leningrad and Karelian (the commander was general K.A. Meretskov) fronts in Karelia with the assistance of the Baltic Fleet under the command of Admiral V.F. Tributs. Having broken the Finns' powerful defense on the Karelian Isthmus, the Soviet troops liberated almost the entire territory of Karelia by late August. In early September the Finnish Government asked for peace. Thus, after Italy, fascist Germany lost one more ally.

On 23 June 1944 there began in Belorussia the very large-scale "Bagration" operation by troops of the 1st Baltic front (the commander was General I.D. Chernyakhoskiy), the 2d Belorussian front (the commander was General G.F. Zakhorov), and the 1st Belorussian front (the commander was General K.K. Rokossovskiy). Moving to the offensive on a sector of over 1,100 km, the Soviet troops broke through the enemy defense with almost simultaneous strikes on six sections on a front of 500 km and surrounded and destroyed large fascist troops groupings in the regions of Vitebsk and Bobruysk. Developing the offensive on converging salients, they surrounded a 105,000-strong enemy grouping east of Minsk and soon annihilated it. During the further offensive, the Soviet troops liberated Belorussia, almost all of Lithuania, part of Latvia, and the eastern regions of Poland and reached Eastern Prussia. During the "Bagration" operation, 17 enemy divisions and 3 enemy brigades were totally destroyed and 50 divisions suffered heavy losses.

The successful development of the Belorussian operation created favorable preconditions for conducting the Lvov-Sandomir operation to defeat the "North Ukraine" group of armies. On 13 July 1944 troops of the 1st Ukrainian front under the command of Marshal of the Soviet Union I.S. Konev delivered a powerful strike on the Rava-Russkaya and Lvov salients and broke through the enemy defense within a 200-km zone. Developing the offensive, on 27 July the troops liberated Lvov and in the first days of August they forced the Vistula on the march and seized a bridgehead in the Sandomir region. In their offensive operation the Soviet troops destroyed 8 enemy divisions and caused enormous personnel losses to 32 divisions. West Ukraine and the southeast part of Poland were liberated.

The echoes of the triumphal salutes in honor of the Soviet Army's victories in Belorussia and the western oblasts of the Ukraine had not died down before a new strike was delivered against the fascist invaders, this time in Moldavia. On 20 August troops of the 2d and 3d Ukrainian fronts under the command of Generals R.Ya. Malinovskiy and F.I. Tolbukhin began the Yassy-Kishinev operation.

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Delivering powerful strikes, by 24 August they had already completed the encirclement of 18 of the 25 German divisions of the "South Ukraine" group of armies. A day before troops of the left flank of the 3d Ukrainian front had surrounded the 3d Romanian Army in the Belgorod-Dnestrovskiy region. During the Soviet Army's successful offensive favorable conditions were created for the Romanian people's armed uprising, as a result of which the country's antifascist forces, under the leadership of the Communist Party, overthrew the dictatorship ruling the country. On 23 August the new Romanian Government decided to withdraw from the alliance with Germany and declared war on it.

Having successfully completed the Yassy-Kishinev operation by the end of August, the troops of the 2d Ukrainian front, with the participation of Romanian troop units, liberated almost all of Romania in September and reached the border with Hungary and Yugoslavia. The troops of the 3d Ukrainian front at the same time went into Bulgarian territory. The people of Bulgaria, led by the Communist Party, overthrew the fascist regime on 9 September and formed a democratic government which took up arms against fascist Germany. Developing the success that had been achieved, the troops of the 3d Ukrainian front moved hostilities to Yugoslav territory in late September and set about liberating the country from Hitler's yoke. At the same time, troops of the 2d Ukrainian front, carrying out the Debrecen operation, liberated the majority of Hungary's territory. Developing the offensive, by late December 1944 the troops of the 2d and 3d Ukrainian fronts had encircled an enemy grouping of nearly 180,000 men near Budapest. On 28 December 1944 the new Hungarian Government declared war on Hitler's Germany.

In late August 1944 an antifascist armed uprising erupted in Slovakia. To render fraternal aid to the Slovak people, Soviet troops used the forces of the 4th Ukrainian front (under the command of General I. Ye. Petrov) and part of the forces of the 1st Ukrainian front to carry out the East Carpathian offensive operation. Having broken through the enemy defense Soviet troops, together with General L. Svoboda's 1st Czechoslovak corps, crossed the Carpathian mountains in the Dukla region in early October and created conditions for Czechoslovakia's liberation.

In the fall of 1944, the troops of the Karelian front under the command of General K.A. Meretskov, with the assistance of the Northern Fleet under the command of Admiral A.G. Golovko, under the exceptionally difficult Arctic conditions defeated the 20th German Mountain Army and reached the Norwegian borders.

The Soviet Armed Forces' crushing strikes in 1943 and early 1944, which essentially presaged the fate of fascist Germany, compelled the U.S. and British ruling circles to set about opening up a second front in Europe. On 6 June 1944 a large-scale allied troops landing operation began in Normandy under the command of U.S. General D. Eisenhower. By late June the number of allied troops landed on French territory already totaled about 900,000. The operation's success was largely helped by the fact that the German fascist command had its main forces -- about 230 of the most combat-capable divisions in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, including 18 divisions at the formation stage.

Western historians are making tremendous efforts in an attempt to prove today that when the second front in Europe was opened up it became virtually the main front of World War II. Those stories are absolutely unfounded. The facts convincingly refute them.

Thus, for instance, in the summer and fall of 1944, U.S.-British troops destroyed 35 enemy divisions, while the Soviet Army destroyed and captured 96 divisions and 24 brigades, defecting 219 divisions and 22 brigades over the same period. Despite the allied troops' offensive launched in France and Italy, Hitler's command kept the main mass of its forces -- 185 divisions -- on the Eastern front in late 1944 and only 74 divisions on the Western front.

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Even after the second front had been opened up in Europe the Soviet Armed Forces thus remained the main strike force of the anti-Hitler coalition and continued to make the decisive contribution to the defeat of fascist Germany.

The year of 1944 was truly a year of decisive victories for the Soviet Union. As a result of the successful strategic offensive operations on the Right-bank Ukraine, in the Crimea, and near Leningrad and Novgorod and in Karelia, Belorussia, the West Ukraine, Moldavia, the Baltic region, and the Arctic, the Soviet Armed Forces totally purged the Soviet land of Hitler's invaders and moved hostilities to the territory of the countries of central and southeast Europe occupied by the fascists. Educated by the Communist Party in a spirit of proletarian internationalism, the USSR Armed Forces rendered tremendous selfless aid to those countries' peoples in their liberation from the foreign yoke. By late 1944 Romania, Bulgaria, a considerable part of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, and north Norway had been purged of German fascist occupiers by Soviet troops.

One of the most important political results of the Soviet Union's imposing victories was the collapse of the fascist bloc in Europe. Finland, Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria broke off their alliance with Germany and declared war on it. The flanks of its strategic front in the east were exposed. A number of neutral states completely halted supplies of strategic war materials to Germany. Turkey broke off diplomatic relations with it. By late 1944 fascist Germany's only remaining ally was Japan. The struggle of the enslaved countries' peoples against Hitler's fascism and Japanese militarism was kindled with new force. The victorious completion of the peoples' imposing battle against the forces of reaction and obscurantism became increasingly visible.

The USSR's military successes exerted decisive influence on the fundamental sociopolitical changes in the European countries it had liberated. Under the leadership of the communist and workers parties the people's masses of these countries embarked on the path of carrying out popular-democratic and socialist revolutions, which were the continuation and development of the process of man's revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, whose foundation was laid by the Great October.

In 1944 the Soviet Armed Forces carried out 10 major strategic offensive operations during which many dozen front and army operations were carried out. They graphically showed the superiority of Soviet military art. Strategic operations like the Belorussian, Yassy-Kishinev, Lvov-Sandomir, and other strategic operations which have considerably enriched Soviet military science have been added as golden assets to its treasury.

In particular questions of preparing and mounting strategic offensive operations by the fronts' groups, of selecting the avenues for a main strike and means of encircling and defeating large enemy groupings, achieving rapid offensive rates, organizing interaction, and so forth were further developed. Questions of the combat application of mobile army groups and fronts, artillery and aircraft attack, and all-around backup for combat operations were also creatively resolved.

Winning major new victories in 1944, the USSR Armed Forces again showed the whole world the invincibility and tremendous potential of the socialist social and state system. These victories were the result of the Communist Party's multifaceted organizational and political work and the entire Soviet people's heroic efforts both at the front and behind the lines. They raised still higher the international prestige and influence of the world's first socialist state.

Developing the successes achieved in 1944, the Soviet Armed Forces in 1945 delivered new crushing strikes against the enemy in 1945. The apotheosis of the Soviet people's Great Patriotic War against Hitler's Germany was the imposing Berlin operation, during which Soviet troops defeated a fascist troop grouping of almost 1 million.

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The scarlet banner of victory fluttered proudly over nazism's overthrown citadel, while the standards of Hitler's "invincible" army lay at the feet of the heroic Soviet people, the victorious people.

During the war the Soviet Armed Forces were firmly and skillfully led by the Supreme High Command Headquarters headed by J.V. Stalin and by its operational organ of control - the General Staff. They constantly felt the tense pulse of war, creatively planned operations and led them precisely, trained strategic reserves in a planned manner, and used them efficiently and skillfully, carefully considering the development of events on the enormous expanses gripped by World War II. A great personal contribution to the victory over the enemy was made by representatives of the Supreme High Command Headquarters and chiefs of general staff of the Great Patriotic War period: G.K. Zhukov, A.M. Vasilevskiy, B.M. Shaposhnikov, and A.I. Antonov. The commanders, staffs, and political organs of the fronts, fleets, armies, and flotillas invested a great deal of labor in preparing and conducting operations.

During the war the mighty strength of our Communist Party, the great leader and experienced and talented guide of the Soviet people, headed by its combat staff, the Leninist Central Committee, was revealed in all its magnitude. The Communist Party acted with Leninist wisdom and vigor and, as during the civil war, became a truly fighting party. While early in the war every ninth serviceman was a Communist, by the end of the war the figure was one in every four.

The Soviet people were the main creators of the victory. The victory was selflessly forged at the front and behind the lines by Soviet people of all nationalities and professions, by urban and rural workers, men and women, Communists, Komsomol members, and nonparty people. It was truly an exploit of all the people. The profoundly just nature of the Great Patriotic War generated the high morale of the troops, the unprecedented scale of the partisan warfare, and the unrivaled labor enthusiasm of the country's entire population.

The results of the Great Patriotic War convincingly showed yet again that imperialism cannot halt the advance of socialism, that there have not been, are not, and will not be forces in the world that can bring the great Soviet people to their knees. "June 1941 will not be repeated," Comrade K.U. Chernenko stresses. "Immediate retribution will overtake any aggressor. Let everyone -- our friends and our foes -- know that."

The Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War marked the start of a new stage in world history and gave rise to the emergence of objective conditions and opportunities for the eradication of military cataclysms from the life of the world community.

The 40th anniversary of our great victory is approaching. In the grim war years the invincible aspiration of millions of people throughout the world to gain victory was inspired not only by the belief that they would soon be rid of fascist enslavement but also by the hope that nothing of the kind would ever happen again. They could not allow the thought that after 6 years of bloody nightmare there would be maniacs who would resolve to trample on the memory of tens of millions of people who had given their lives for victory and to push mankind into the abyss of a new war. People thirsted for peace and had an indisputable right to it.

But World War II did not eliminate the source of constant military danger that imperialism represents. Moreover, as a result of the continuing general crisis of capitalism the aggressiveness of imperialist policy has increased.

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The new claimants to world rule -- the U.S. militarists -- have learned nothing from the experience of their German fascist ideological predecessors and rivals and have seized on their delirious designs. Growing very rich on the blood and suffering of millions, blackmailing the world with the nuclear weapons created at the end of World War II, they have considered it almost their natural right to win world dominion and eliminate all those who are preventing them from establishing it.

There has been a particularly sharp increase in reckless bellicosity in the United States in the eighties with the arrival in the White House of the administration of R. Reagan, the stooge of the most reactionary and aggressive circles of U.S. imperialism. It was to their advantage and in accordance with their scenario, in the heat of this imperial ambitions that he deliberately broke off the talks in Geneva and unleashed the unrestrained arms race and is thoughtlessly pushing the world toward nuclear war. The U.S. President noisily declared a "crusade" against socialism. Counter to sanity, using the short-sightedness of the ruling circles of a number of NATO countries, he began to deploy first-strike nuclear weapons in West Europe; he allows himself to juggle irresponsibly and cynically with "jokes" about nuclear bomb attacks on the USSR.

You ask: How should all these threats be understood? Do they mean that the destiny of war and peace is wholly in the hands of the U.S. "hawks" and that all that is left for mankind is to bow its head in submission and wait for its fate to be decided by madmen? Do they mean that there is no force in the world capable of twisting the arms of the maniacs who have raised the sword of death over the world? No, that is not what they mean. War can and must be prevented. The lessons of history demand it. And for that the sociopolitical and military-technical prerequisites exist.

As is well known, World War I began a decade after the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war -- one of the first major armed clashes of the era of imperialism. At the time it was virtually impossible to avert it. It was unleashed under conditions when capitalism was the only all-encompassing system, when the leading capitalist states' political course was wholly determined by the bourgeoisie which ruled the international arena undivided. The peace-loving forces were still extremely weak and uncoordinated while the leaders of the social democratic parties of the majority of European countries, betraying their peoples' interests, had embarked on the path of chauvinism and open support for the bourgeoisie's militarist policy. World War I continued 4 years and took 10 million human lives.

An interval of 20 years separated World War II from World War I. And although in that time capitalism was no longer an all-embracing system, the threat of war was nonetheless not successfully averted. In the prewar years the world's first and at that time only socialist state, the Soviet Union, pursuing a consistent policy of peace resolutely advocated curbing the fascist aggressors and creating a system of collective security. However, all the USSR's efforts to preserve peace encountered the short-sighted anti-Soviet policy of the United States, Britain, France, and a number of other capitalist states which encouraged the Nazi aggressors to unleash war in East Europe and to undertake a "crusade" against the USSR. World War II lasted 6 years and took over 50 million lives.

Nearly 40 years have elapsed since World War II. The political map of the world has now been fundamentally transformed. The defeat of fascist Germany and militarist Japan in 1945, the implementation of socialist revolutions in a number of countries, and the formation of a world socialist system, the building of developed socialism in the USSR and the successful building of a new society in other fraternal countries, the upsurge of the national liberation movement and the complete collapse of the colonial system have fundamentally altered the nature of the world and the correlation of class and sociopolitical forces in the international arena in favor of socialism.

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ver new states are dropping from the capitalist system, now in one part of the world, now in another. Capitalism's sphere of influence is narrowing inexorably. Capitalism, U.S. capitalism in particular, despite its still considerable reserves, has ceased to be an economic, political, and military force monopolizing the present-day world and cannot determine the fate of mankind on its own.

In our day the imperialist bourgeoisie has become the "declining, decadent, internally dead, reactionary" class. (V.I. Lenin: "Complete Collected Works," Vol 26, pp 145-146) That is why the unprecedented impudence of its monopolist ruling clique which is threateningly and ostentatiously brandishing its "atomic stick" and noisy declarations of "crusades" against socialism is by no means a sign of strength, but a manifestation of weakness, of the historical futility of the capitalist system. The correlations of forces in the international arena has changed irreversibly in favor of the forces of peace and social progress. Real objective preconditions have formed for the elimination of war from the life of society.

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On the historical plane the theoretical and practical activity of the leader of the world proletariat, V.I. Lenin, and his creative development of K. Marx' teaching under new historical conditions serve as a classic example of a profoundly scientific approach to the solution of questions of society's development, including the vitally important problem of war and peace. On the basis of a profound, all-around analysis of capitalism and its supreme stage -- imperialism -- Lenin scientifically substantiated the possibility and inevitability of the victory of socialism, initially in a few or even just one individual capitalist country. Lenin's brilliant scientific perspicacity was fully confirmed by the victory of socialist revolution in Russia and by the entire course of subsequent historical development.

In our time the Communist Party, guided by the theory of Marxism-Leninism and creatively developing and enriching it with application to the present situation, has drawn the conclusion that war is not fatally inevitable. Although the class nature and aggressive essence of imperialism remain unchanged, the deepening of the overall crisis of capitalism and the intensification of socialism's role in international life, the formation and steady development of the world socialist system, the raising of the socialist community countries' defense capability to the level of the guaranteed destruction [sokrusheniye] of any aggressor, and the increase in the cohesion and activation of the Nonaligned Movement and of other peace-loving forces and movements considerably restrict imperialism's opportunities for unleashing aggressive wars, especially against the socialist countries, and create sociopolitical and military-technical preconditions for preventing a new world war. Here, of course, the threat of war still remains, but it can be neutralized.

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The socialist communist countries headed by the Soviet Union, which knows better than any other state the true price of the horrors of war and is therefore waging a tireless struggle against it with particular persistence, are the decisive factor in preventing war and the main bulwark of the world's peoples in the struggle for peace. The Soviet Union's Leninist foreign policy has for nearly 7 decades now been subject to no considerations of expediency and is aimed at the all-around consolidation of peace.

The Communist Party has always been opposed to militarism and the export of revolution. War does not accord with the nature of socialism. It is well known that right up to the Great October Socialist Revolution the party's Program made no provision at all for the creation of a regular army. The Russian working people had sufficient volunteer formations -- the Red Guard and the revolutionary units of the old army -- to overthrow tsarism and the bourgeois provisional government in 1917. Only the danger of military intervention, the actions of the internal counterrevolution supported by foreign capital, and the threat to the existence of Soviet power obliged Lenin and the Communist Party to set about creating the regular Red Army for the sole purpose of "protecting the gains of the revolution...against all the enemies of the people..." (V.I. Lenin: "Complete Collected Works," Vol 35, p 216)

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The consistent struggle for peace and the consolidation of international security comprise the general line of the foreign policy activity of the Communist Party and Soviet state. And the economic and military might of the Soviet Union and all countries of the socialist community and their armed forces' constant high combat readiness are the main restraining factor and insurmountable barrier to an aggressor in his attempts to kindle the conflagration of a new world war. It is for that reason that our defense potential, as Comrade K.U. Chernenko pointed out, "is not only a guarantee of the Soviet people's constructive labor but also a guarantee of universal world peace."

To attempt to break the established military equilibrium and to seek military superiority over the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries is an undertaking no less futile than nurturing hopes of a victory for the aggressor in nuclear war. The Soviet people and their allies in the Warsaw Pact are not seeking military superiority over other countries and our military doctrine has always been and is of a strictly defensive orientation. But they have sufficient forces and potential to prevent superiority over themselves.

The international communist and workers movement has become a powerful, influential present-day political force in the struggle for peace and social progress. It now numbers about 100 parties in its ranks. Reflecting the feelings and aspirations of the peoples' broadest masses, the communist and workers parties advocate the conservation of the cause of disarmament and raise the people's masses to the all-around activation of the antiwar movement and the struggle to spare mankind from the threat of a nuclear missile war. The organized working class' participation in the antiwar movement is growing. This imparts a more resolute nature to the entire movement and increases its degree of organization.

An important factor in the struggle for the prevention of war and for peaceful coexistence is the national liberation movement and the enhanced role of the Nonaligned Movement. By the early eighties there were over 110 developing states that had achieved national independence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and of these about 20 have chosen a path of socialist orientation.

As a component of the peace movement, the peoples' struggle for independence and social progress invariably leads to the steady weakening of world imperialism's positions, the narrowing of its social base, and the further intensification of its overall crisis. All this as a whole helps to prevent wars.

The world's peoples are responding to the stepping up of the threat of war by the broad scope of the antiwar movement and the struggle for peace. The populations of Britain, France, Italy, and many other countries greeted the deployment of U.S. Pershings and cruise missiles in West Europe with mass, unceasing protest demonstrations. These demonstrations have encompassed literally all social strata -- from workers and scientists to clergymen, parliamentarians, and housewives. The peoples' struggle against U.S. acts of aggression in the Near East and Central America has acquired broad scope. All the attempts of the Reagan administration and its vassals to undermine or at least weaken the pitch of this movement are proving futile.

The growing scope of the antiwar, anti-imperialist struggle throughout the world is a reflection of a common natural historical law of social development: the enhancement of the people's role as the makers of history. The working masses are intervening increasingly persistently and vigorously in the world's destiny and in the solution of the most important and urgent problem of the present day, the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe. There is no doubt that as the masses become even more deeply aware of the menacing danger of the pernicious consequence of a thermonuclear conflict and of its true sources, the scope of this movement will grow steadily. It cannot be ignored even now. Of course, of itself the antiwar movement does not fully resolve the problem of war and peace. However, it can considerably restrict the freedom of action of the unbridled bourgeois rulers and their masters.

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The strength of the working masses' pressure and awareness, Lenin pointed out, has frequently "snapped off the spearhead of the imperialists' bellicose policy." ("Complete Collected Works," Vol 42, p 134) Under present conditions the influence of this force has increased by many times and it is becoming dangerous to ignore it.

Alongside the above-mentioned sociopolitical factors there are now other purely military preconditions restricting imperialism's opportunity for unleashing new wars. These preconditions are caused by the rapid scientific and technical progress which has led to a dialectical leap, to a veritable revolution in military matters. The appearance of nuclear weapons, with their unbelievable strike power, in 1945 and their rapid subsequent improvement posed a new way the question of the expediency of war as a means of achieving a political end. The grim reality of our day is that, in contrast to the past, the very correlation of ^{very} important categories like "war" and "policy" has changed. Only when you have definitely lost your sense of reason can you try to find arguments or to define a goal that would justify unleashing a world nuclear war, thus confronting human civilization with the threat of destruction. "Hence," Comrade K.U. Chernenko has indicated, "the irrefutable conclusion that it is criminal to view thermonuclear war as a ^{national} ~~national~~, almost 'legitimate' continuation of policy."

Through the fault of the United States, which has launched an unbridled arms race, stockpiles of nuclear weapons have been accumulated in the world today which, from the military viewpoint, are already truly absurd. Thus, for instance, in just one first strike, U.S. strategic nuclear forces can now use about 12,000 nuclear charges with a total yield hundreds of times in excess of the total yield of all explosives and ammunition employed by all the world's states in the entire 6 years of World War II. And that is just for the above-mentioned forces in the United States alone. Yet if you consider that there is approximate parity in the sides' nuclear arms, you do not need to be a military specialist to understand that the further stockpiling of these arms becomes simply pointless. Excessively large stockpiles of nuclear weapons not only do not guarantee security and impunity for any aggressive state but rather the reverse: They increase the danger that it will be subjected to crushing retribution from the victim of aggression.

Thus, for the first time in history the main sides confronting each other have created a surplus of military potentials, primarily nuclear potentials. And this alters the qualitative aspect of the phenomenon in military matters. As a result a paradox arises: On the one hand there would seem to be a process whereby a nuclear state's potential for destroying an enemy and safeguarding its own security is steadily increasing and on the other there is just as steady and one might say an even sharper reduction in the potential for aggressors to deliver a so-called "disarming strike" against their main adversary.

The point is that with the quantity and diversity of nuclear missile weapons now achieved it is already simply impossible for an aggressor to totally destroy the opposite side's similar weapons in a single strike. And an immediate, crushing response using even the limited quantity of nuclear weapons remaining to the defending side -- a response making it impossible for the aggressor subsequently to wage war or to conduct any serious operations -- becomes inevitable under present conditions. The transatlantic strategists' counting on the possibility of waging a "limited" nuclear war has no foundation whatsoever. Any limited use of nuclear weapons will inevitably lead to the immediate use of the sides', entire nuclear arsenal. That is the grim logic of war. The Pentagon's dreams of the possibility of a so-called "unanswered limited nuclear strike" against the enemy's main centers and control points are all the more unsound. These strictly bureaucratic and militarily incompetent arguments are absolutely unfounded and dangerous. The propaganda of these ignorant arguments must be exposed.

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All this is evidence that Lenin's conclusion that the danger of war "will not cease as long as world imperialism exists" ("Complete Collected Works," Vol 42, p 173) undoubtedly retains its topicality even today. However, the qualitatively new historical, sociopolitical, and military-technical preconditions and circumstances which have formed in the present-day world create conditions for eliminating wars as a sociopolitical phenomenon and primarily world wars which contain the threat of the destruction of all world civilization.

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Nearly 40 years separate us from the spring of 1945, which announced the Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War. It was great victory for the sake of peace and life on earth, for the triumph of freedom, democracy, and social progress. The year of 1944, the year of the Soviet Armed Forces' decisive victories over fascism, was of special importance on the path toward this bright and joyous holiday.

The lessons of the past war are of abiding significance today. And "the main lesson," the CPSU Central Committee resolution "On the 40th Anniversary of the Soviet People's Victory in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War" stresses, "is that war must be combated before it begins." And the opportunities and forces, considerable forces, for doing this now exist. Today the aggressive circles of imperialism can no longer fail to consider the growing weight and influence of these forces or the might of the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces. And, as Comrade K.U. Chernenko noted, "as long as military and political tension exists, as long as the nuclear missile threat from the United States and the NATO states looms over our country, we must keep our powder dry, always be on guard to ensure that the correlation of forces does not change in imperialism's favor and that we do not prove to be the weaker."

These instructions from the CPSU Central Committee general secretary and chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium accord with the aspirations of the Soviet people and the peoples of the whole world. At the same time they are a program for the activity of the Soviet Armed Forces whose sacred duty, together with their combat allies in the Warsaw Pact, the armies of the other socialist community countries, is to reliably defend the gains of socialism and peace on earth.